# The Capitol Hill Monitor

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## ECPA HITS HOME

by Alan Henney

When Congress passed the Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986, I would have never guessed that more than 10 years later, three acquaintances of mine would be accused of violating it.

On the morning of August 27, a joint task force of more than a dozen flak-jacketed law enforcement officers arrested Steve Gessmann, 37, Vinnie Martin, 41, and Jeffrey Moss, 25. Gessmann and his twin brother Rob are the owners of the Breaking News Network (with which I am affiliated). Martin is the company's manager and Moss is a former BNN stringer/dispatcher. BNN is one of several alphanumeric pager notification systems that alerts fire/police buffs, scanner enthusiasts, media, public adjusters and others of breaking news stories.

All three were charged with conspiring to intercept pager messages. A second complaint accuses Moss with the unlawful interception of pager messages. According to the Aug. 29 Record, the government alleges that "Moss used a regular police scanner hooked into his personal computer, and a program he bought called 'Message Tracker.' In a series of interviews held at Moss' Upper East Side apartment, the indictment says, Moss demonstrated for investigators how he could tune his scanner in to the frequency used by PageNet, the paging company providing service to the police."

"With his scanner tuned in to the proper frequency and the software running on his computer," the Record reported, "Moss would see the capcode of all PageNet messages in New York on the left side of the screen and the accompanying text message on the right. After reading these messages for a while, a somewhat tedious undertaking, considering the thousands of PageNet pagers in service in New York, Moss would determine which capcodes came up for messages that seemed to be directed at top officials and other important people, the government alleges."

The government charges that Moss then used pager programming equipment purchased from Motorola to put the capcodes inside other pagers which the government alleges BNN used to receive tips on breaking news events.

After his arrest, Steve Gessmann said he was hauled off to a jail cell where he was handcuffed to a pole for hours and was treated like a hardened criminal (bail for each of the three had initially been set at $250,000 but was later reduced to $50,000). With the accused behind bars, Mary Jo White, US Attorney for the Southern District of New York, started putting her spin on the arrests at a well-staged press conference.

"These arrests should serve as a wake-up call," White charged, "to all who would be tempted to snoop on the electronic communications of others." White said the charges were a "wake-up call" to the public, as well as the business and law enforcement [some of whom have been using pager decoding equipment for years].

"If you are using a paging system, your communications may not be secure," White warned, noting that "no governmental agency or business is immune from this illegal monitoring." (Regardless of what had happened, White may actually be weakening her case, and similar cases, by acknowledging just how easy it is to decode paging data.)

White suggested to reporters that BNN intercepted sensitive alphanumeric pager messages intended for New York City officials and rebroadcast that information to BNN customers. During a press conference to challenge the allegations, and in a written statement issued by BNN on Aug. 28, the network stated that "There was a great deal of loose talk about cloned pagers of city officials as high as the Mayor, but not one such pager has been taken from the BNN office."

BNN's many media clients, the statement maintains, can attest to the fact that no sensitive information, such as "the location of crime witnesses, secret investigative information, and sensitive political information," has ever been transmitted by BNN. Furthermore, the network's clientele, the statement added, "includes numerous federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies who would certainly object if such [sensitive] information were broadcast to them."

During her press conference, White exhibited a table packed with electronics and a single BNN pager --suggesting it all had been seized from BNN. "You might be interested to know," states BNN's press release, "that none of that equipment [other than the BNN pager] was seized from anyone charged in this matter, and BNN has no idea what that equipment was, or whose it is."

The Secret Service agent in charge of a national investigation into what he called electronic "Peeping Toms," told the Aug. 28 Austin American-Statesman that since February 1995 about 35 investigators from various federal and local law enforcement agencies have been looking at various spying devices being sold illegally in the United States, including those that can monitor alphanumeric pages.

In official documents prepared for the court by Secret Service Special Agent Paul J. Mahon, he charges that two confidential informants claim Steve Gessmann and Martin used "cloned" pagers to monitor pages sent to New York City police, fire and emergency management officials as well as to a competing notification service.

But BNN says in its statement that the network believes "the authorities decided to act on the basis of information that may have been fabricated by two disgruntled former volunteers [turned confidential informants] who were separated from the company six months ago, one of whom is a former city official with ties to the Mayor's office and the Secret Service, and who has publicly vowed to destroy the company."

Carl T. Rowan, Jr., a lawyer for BNN, also accused prosecutors and city officials of going after the news service because BNN embarrassed the mayor and others by helping the news media reach the scenes of news stories before city officials. "This is a fact that apparently does not sit well with some of those officials," he said during the news conference at the company's Fort Lee, N.J. office.

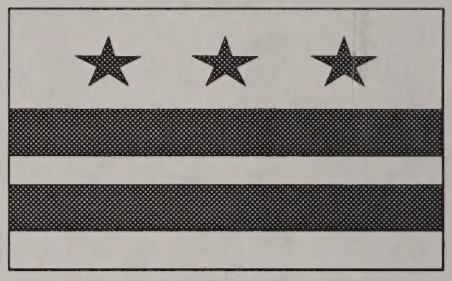
Some journalists, reported the Aug. 28 Los Angeles Times also "grumbled that the crackdown was part of a larger effort by Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani and his allies to exert more control over the New York area media. 'It just means that now they'll have time to secure the crime scene before we get there,' said Peter Moses of WWOR-TV in Secaucus, N.J." BNN's media clients include the New York Post, Newsday, AP, and several radio and TV stations.

"As far as we are aware," White told reporters, "these arrests mark the first-ever prosecutions of unlawful interceptions of messages sent to pagers." This has been made into a high profile case with press coverage ranging from CNN, ABC to the New York Times and Wall Street Journal.

The "fact remains," charges the Aug. 29 Record, "that the police may have been naive to put their trust in text-based pagers. The indictment says the NYPD issued 110 pagers to top officials to use for messages 'too sensitive to broadcast on police radios.'"

"We tell consumers that if they have any information that could be valuable to others, don't use wireless at all," said Beth Givens, project director of the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse in an interview with the Aug. 28 Washington Post. She said she was shocked that a police department would use such insecure communication.

The First Amendment also plays an interesting role in cases similar to this one. According to one First Amendment attorney, the airwaves are public, and as such, restricting people's ability to access them, especially messages which are so easily deciphered, could constitute censorship. But because of the enormous amount of money required to challenge laws like the ECPA, we may never see it contested.



## TRUNKED SYSTEM Q&A FROM DC FIRE

We are grateful to Danny Weiss, the management information systems director and project manager for the District's fire department's 800 MHz trunked radio system procurement, for taking time to respond to our questions. Here are CHM's questions and his responses. But first, Mr. Weiss wanted to clarify what he sees as a common misconception as to how the contract was awarded to Motorola. The contract, he emphasizes, is a "cooperative purchasing contract and, therefore, is neither a 'no-bid,' or sole source contract..."

"Like a GSA schedule or other Federal contract," he states, "the District utilized the Fairfax County contract because it was a competitively bid con-

tract that had the goods and services we needed. In fact, over the years, the DC Council members have strongly encouraged District procurement personnel to make more use of Washington Council of Government (COG) cooperative purchasing contracts, along with other contract vehicles that can save the District significant time and effort in the procurement process."

Fairfax County, Mr. Weiss added, conducted a competitive procurement process from beginning to end, and the District took advantage of it --saving a considerable amount of time and money in the process. The Inspector General's investigation of the contract is complete and they found it to be competitively awarded and within the procurement rules --without qualifications.

**CHM**: What is the current status of the DCFD trunked system? Are funding issues, Control Board concerns and FCC approval moving along okay?

**DCFD:** The Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department is optimistically awaiting final action on its license extension application and the system construction plan by the Federal Communications Commission. Meanwhile, the Department has been conducting preliminary work for the project, including activities such as site preparation, since the contract was approved by the Council and Control Board in December, 1996. All of the required actions internal to the District Government have been completed: the contract and project funding has been approved by the Council, the Control Board, and the Budget Office, and the contract is fully executed.

The FCC approval process is moving along, as far as we know, without any specific problems or causes for concern. Unfortunately, it is impossible to predict with any accuracy when the FCC will actually provide the District with a final decision.

**CHM**: Do you have an approximate construction time-line yet (a good guess would be okay)? When do you expect the switch-over to start?

**DCFD:** Based on the construction plans in the system contract, we expect that the new 800 MHz radio system will be on-line approximately one year from the date we receive the license approval from the FCC.

**CHM:** What about other city agencies? Have any of them expressed interest in joining the system now or in the future? Does MPD still want its own system?

**DCFD:** Other city agencies are definitely interested in moving to a consolidated 800 MHz radio system. Separately from the Fire and EMS system issues, efforts are continuing to restore some or all of the 800 MHz frequencies that were previously assigned to the Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP). If this effort is successful, those frequencies would provide the basis for consolidating some or all of the major radio-using District agencies onto a single radio infrastructure.

The major exception to this is the Metropolitan Police Department, which is generally satisfied with its current radio system and spectrum allocation, although they are expected to have an interface to whatever 800 MHz systems are ultimately implemented for other agencies.

**CHM**: What's the status of the joint MPD-fire/EMS-OEP communications center on McMillan Drive? At one time it was suggested that the center and a multi-agency trunked system would come online together --do you see that happening?

**DCFD:** The consolidated Public Safety Communications Center project is still the cornerstone of the District's long-range strategy for public safety radio communications, and Fire & EMS, Police, and OEP remain the main agencies that will house their communications facilities there. Work is continuing to complete the construction of all the buildings that will comprise the center on McMillan Drive.

At this point, it is difficult to predict whether the schedules for the Fire/EMS 800 MHz system construction and cut-over and the building construction will coincide exactly. We are working to ensure sufficient flexibility in both sets of plans to ensure that neither project poses a delay to the other, and that both are completed as quickly as possible.

Many thanks to Mr. Weiss for keeping us informed. Questions regarding the department can be e-mailed to: DCFEMS@ibm.net

## MPD ABOLISHES SCOUT CAR BEATS

On the morning of July 2, the District's police department phased out its scout car beats which had been around for more than 25 years and replaced them with approximately 80 "patrol service area" (PSA) beats. In theory, each PSA beat is self-sufficient, with its own patrol and vice officers, detectives and officials.

Instead of scout car beats, patrol cars are now assigned to PSA beats that are uniquely identified by a three-digit number. The first digit is the district, and the next two are the area within that district. A fourth digit uniquely identifies the officer patrolling that PSA since each PSA includes several officers.

"2081," for example, is a 2nd District patrol car in area "08" and is the primary beat car in PSA 208. "2082" would be the second patrol car in that PSA. These officers technically identify as "PSA 2081" and "PSA 2082." Each PSA typically has two patrol cars per shift.

"PSA 2S08," "PSA 2F08" and "PSA 2M08" are scooter, footbeat and mountain bike patrols, respectively, in PSA 208. If more than one of a single patrol exists, the officers add a letter suffix such as an "A," "B" or "C."

The sergeant (PSA official) responsible for PSA 208 identifies as "Cruiser 2080" and a master patrol officer (MPO) in PSA 208 would add a "9" and identify as "Cruiser 2089." The 2nd District watch commander is "Cruiser 200," and other 2nd District lieutenants identify as cruisers in the lower 200's.

Numbers assigned to "citywide" cruisers from headquarters have also been renumbered --although you'll hear some old numbers still in use. To further complicate listening, the borders for the 2nd, 3rd and 5th districts have undergone significant changes. As of this writing, officers continue to work off patrol maps with the word "draft" written on them. We hope to have a real map as soon as the official versions are available.

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY REALIGNS PATROL AREAS

The new Montgomery County police patrol areas, says Ray Chin, went into effect on July 7. The district borders and beats have changed. Ray says he hopes to have a map shortly.

## PG COMBINES DISPATCH OPERATIONS

Earlier this year control of dispatch operations for all Prince George's County public safety agencies (fire, police, sheriff and corrections) was transferred to the Public Safety Director's office. This collection of dispatch centers has been dubbed "Public Safety Communications." Once renovations are complete and the new CAD comes online, all county public safety agencies will dispatch from the Central Communications Facility (9-1-1 center) off Central Avenue in Landover.

The police and fire departments already dispatch from the CCF. And on July 1, the CCF began dispatching sheriff's deputies in Prince George's County. Monday through Friday, from 6:30 a.m. to 1 a.m., deputies are dispatched over the sheriff channels by their regular dispatcher. During all other times deputies are dispatched by the police channel 5 dispatcher. During that time, 155.58 and 494.5625 are simulcast.

## HOUSE PROPOSES EXPANDING SCANNER PROHIBITIONS

Two bills are pending in the House of Representatives that, if passed, would further restrict the frequency coverage, digital potential and capabilities of new scanners.

As it reads now, Section 302 of Title 47 of the United States Code denies equipment authorization for a scanning receiver that is capable of: (A) receiving transmissions in the frequencies allocated to the domestic cellular radio telecommunications service, (B) readily being altered by the user to receive transmissions in such frequencies, or (C) being equipped with decoders that convert digital cellular transmissions to analog voice audio.

H.R. 1964 would further expand this to cover the entire "commercial mobile service (as such term is defined in section 332(d))" --not just "the domestic cellular radio telecommunications service," that the section currently protects.

Section 332(d) defines the phrase "commercial mobile service" as "any mobile service that is provided for

profit and makes interconnected [telephone] service available (A) to the public or (B) to such classes of eligible users as to be effectively available to a substantial portion of the public, as specified by regulation by the Commission." The changes would take effect one year from the date of such changes.

On July 30, Rep. Billy Tauzin (R-La.), chairman of the House Telecommunications, Trade and Consumer Protection subcommittee, introduced H.R. 2369, dubbed the "Wireless Privacy Enhancement Act of 1997," which includes prohibitions similar to those in H.R. 1964 with additional amendments to specifically prohibit modification of scanning receivers.

H.R. 2369 also strengthens unauthorized interception or publication of communications statutes and penalties that exist in Section 705 (47 U.S.C. 605). It would prohibit the mere interception of any radio communication without permission as opposed to the interception and divulgence as Section 705 currently reads.

As of this writing, both bills have been referred to the House Telecommunications, Trade and Consumer Protection subcommittee. Thanks to our friends at Monitoring Times and Benn Kobb for bringing this legislation to our attention. For the complete text of the bills, check out http://thomas.loc.gov or call the House Legislative Resource Center at 202-226-5200.


## REVIEW OF RAINBOW'S WBA-6 PREAMPLIFIER KIT

by Ralph Johnson
(johnson@cpcug.org)

The Rainbow WBA-6 is an excellent little pre-amplifier to boost receiver signal strength in the 1 MHz to 2.5 GHz range. The advertised gain is 20dB at 1 MHz decreasing to 6 dB at 2 GHz. I put the kit version together in a couple hours spread over a couple days to test it out. I am very happy with the results.

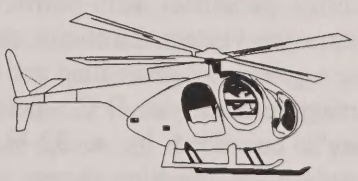
To see how good it is I had just breadboarded the circuit and attached female BNC connectors so I could patch it into my Uniden scanner. On a quick test I was able to receive signals I didn't receive before. To double test I would listen for a weak signal and then switch the power on and off. As I did so, I could tell a distinct difference in signal level and clarity.

The circuit itself is very simple. It is a MAR-6 transistor with power and DC isolation from the input and output combined with an inductance on the power input to choke any RF that tries to escape through the input. The whole circuit is one inch by 5/8 inch. The blocking capacitors are minuscule and the transistor is spider size. A magnifying lens is helpful to ensure there are no solder short circuits. However, I got it together in about an hour and then a couple days later connected the power leads and BNC connectors. Things didn't go up in smoke when I applied the 12 volts drive and later when tested, it worked like I stated above.

For final assembly I plan to enclose it in a small box to attach, primarily, to my frequency counter. The BNC connectors will define the box size since the small size of the circuit would otherwise allow me to use a much smaller box. I will include in the box a miniature connector for 12 volt from some small 12 volt ni-cad batteries or power off the car's cigarette adapter.

Electronic Rainbow is in Indianapolis,Indiana317-291-7262or www.rainbowkits.com


**FOR SALE:** Scout frequency counter, Model 40, version 3.1, includes the charger, soft case, manual and box. It will reaction tune the AR8000 and ICOM R-10 (and perhaps other radios as well). The Scout sells for $399 (new), and they often sell on the 'net in the $300-350 range. Mike says his Scout is in excellent shape, so he's asking $325 and that includes delivery to a CHM member in the metro area. Contact Mike McKeehan at 301-282-9748.



## WTTG-TV INTRODUCES NEWS CHOPPER 5

WTTG-TV, the local Fox affiliate has introduced a news and traffic helicopter. Its FAA identification is N5FX and it is based at Hyde Field. Instructions to the helicopter as to

events to cover and the like are given over WTTG's desk frequency, 161.73 [CSQ]. The helicopter was noted as being very active on Sunday, 14 September, during the opening of Jack Kent Cook Stadium and the almost simultaneous crash of an F-117A Stealth Fighter at Martin State Airport in Middle River, Maryland.

## NEWSSCAN

NEW SECURITY PATROLS FOR DC? Private security patrols and street-cleaning crews will be assigned to a 120-block section of downtown Washington in November as part of an effort by District business leaders to revitalize the city's commercial heart, says the July 27 Washington Post. In an effort patterned after similar programs in other cities, private property owners will tax themselves to finance and run the five-year, $38.5 million operation, which will provide services the District government can't afford.

Carrying walkie-talkies but not weapons, as many as 55 uniformed security personnel will patrol on foot, giving visitors directions, stopping aggressive panhandling and reporting crimes to D.C. police. They'll be aided by a 32-block closed-circuit television camera system. The area targeted for improvement includes the MCI Center, the existing and planned convention centers and the proposed Washington Opera house. It is bounded roughly by Massachusetts Avenue, Interstate 395, Constitution Avenue and 16th Street NW and includes the neighborhoods of Penn Quarter, Gallery Place, Chinatown, McPherson Square and Franklin Square.

The security patrols and cleaning teams are supposed to be in place by the Dec. 2 opening of the MCI Center. Although the BID will operate virtually outside the District government, the city is required by law to continue to provide services to the area. In addition to security patrols, attempts will be made to coordinate law enforcement with D.C. police and the 2,000 public and private security personnel already working downtown.

Hubert Williams, who heads the Police Foundation, a Washington-based research group, questioned the need for another security agency in a city where 27 operate already. He suggested that the added calls made by the private security force to D.C. police could lead to an overload. And he said the BID must make it clear who is liable for the actions of the private patrol.

MOTORCADE vs AMBULANCE. A July Bob Levey's Washington Post column asked the question: If a D.C. ambulance is on its way to an emergency call and the president's motorcade approaches from a cross street, who has the right of way? The answer was that no law or policy covers the situation. "However," Levey writes, "according to a spokesman for the Secret Service, the president's motorcade would always have (and would always expect) the right of way."

"The lead vehicle of the president's motorcade," the article stated, "can always be in direct communication with any D.C. police car or ambulance, the Secret Service spokesman said [anyone hear of this?]. D.C. police officers and firefighters would always defer to the presidential motorcade 'just because he's the president,' the spokesman said. If there were any problems, all it would take would be one radio request, the spokesman said."

Perhaps the answer just didn't have that political-correctness it should have. About two weeks later, Levey says the information he obtained did come from a Secret Service spokesman. "But the chief spokesman, Arnette Heintze, called to say that the policy is exactly the opposite. The service 'will pull over and let the ambulance pass,' Arnette said. 'We'll even split the motorcade if need be' to let the ambulance by. The service would insist on the right of way only if the situation 'impacted on the president's security,' Arnette said. Sorry for any misunderstanding."

DC GETS THIRD TRAFFIC SERVICE. SmarTraveler is a 17-employee information service sponsored by 37 government agencies and businesses that promises updates on traffic, subway and bus routes to ease congestion in the Washington area. Transportation officials, the July 2 Washington Times reported, called this the region's first integrated service and will give commuters more accurate travel times and the latest progress reports on construction.

SmarTraveler gathers information from 50 volunteer stringers with cell phones, police, transportation agencies, mounted cameras and two observation planes to give commuters alternative routes that will spread out the traffic. The service operates from the eighth-floor at 400 Virginia Ave SW and cost $12.2 million, with $9.4 million in federal funds and $2.8 million from the private sector.

The coverage area consists of a 25-mile radius from downtown Washington. The service communicates primarily on 463.25 [162.2] and is also reportedly licensed on 464.500 [77.0?], but have not yet been heard there. They operate Monday through Friday, 5:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. To access the service,
call 202/863-1313;
by cellular phone, dial #211; or
http://www.smartraveler.com

MONTGOMERY COUNTY'S TRUNKED SYSTEM. The front page of the Aug. 27 Montgomery Journal profiled the county's proposed trunked radio system. Bids on the estimated $27 million system are due by Oct. 3 [refer to the May-June CHM for details]. A related project, which the county hopes to install in tandem with the radios, would place laptop computers in every police car and fire and rescue vehicle. The computer system would cost between $10 and $15 million.

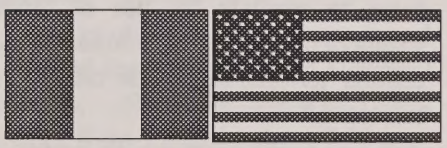
Sgt. Bruce Blair, radio systems manager for the county police, claimed the county has about 50 existing channels which cannot be expanded and can no longer handle the volume. A number of radios, he added, failed in the Wheaton and Germantown police districts in 1987 and the entire system went down for more than an hour in 1995. The majority of the problems occur with portable radios, where dead spots can occur 20 to 25 percent of the time in remote areas. The proposed system is supposed to reduce the amount of dead spots to 5 percent.

The headline of a sidebar article, "Police want to nix eavesdropping," caught the attention of scanner listeners. "Montgomery County hopes to begin phasing in a digital radio communications system by December 1999 that will prevent outsiders --including criminals on the run --from monitoring conversations," the article warned. The advanced radio technology, Blair claimed, should not only improve the efficiency of police and emergency operations but make it tougher, if not impossible, for anyone to track the calls with conventional scanners. The county intends to add "special circuitry within the radios that will make it impossible for anyone except members of the force" to follow sensitive police conversations.

HOW RADIO REVOLUTIONIZED BG&E METER READING. The June-July issue of Radio Resource Magazine had an three-page article concerning Baltimore Gas & Electric's wireless meter reading system. The utility has 500,000 gas and 1.1 million electric customers in Baltimore and nine central Maryland counties, so modernization was essential. Throughout its billing area BG&E installed an automatic meter reading (AMR) system that allows meter readers to take remote 900 MHz radio readings while walking their routes.

A wake-up signal is sent from the handheld device to an encoder-receiver-transmitter (ERT) unit installed on the gas or electric meter. In turn, the ERT transmits meter and tamper information back to the handheld. Meter information is displayed on the handheld's LCD and automatically recorded in its database which is eventually uploaded into the billing system. ERTs proved to be a success even in hard-to-penetrate locations. More than 24,000 ERTs can be read per hour from a mobile AMR van.

BG&E is now piloting a fixed network to read the ERTs. Meter readings are collected and transmitted using stationary units, instead of mobile units. This system extension, called Genesis Fixed Network, uses utility pole-mounted devices called cell control units (CCU), which work on the same principle as the mobile units. On schedule or by command, CCUs activate the ERT-equipped gas or electric meters via radio in a given locale and, in turn, transmit the collected data to a more centrally located unit called a network control node (NCN). That information is then forwarded back to the utility's billing system. Under normal conditions, a local CCU can collect reads from hundreds of ERTs over a wide geographic area.



PERU JOINS U.S. IN WAR ON SNOOPERS. Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori has denied that telephone espionage is being carried out by his intelligence services and says one or more private individuals must have used a scanner to make the recordings that were broadcast by the TV program Counterpoint. The July 19 BBC reported that he claims his personal calls have also been intercepted and advocates legislation to regulate the use of scanners.

"Look," Fujimori told the BBC, "when you make a call using a cellu-

lar telephone those waves go out into space. That space is free. Anyone can listen in and there is equipment, called scanners [preceding word in English], that anyone can buy for 30,000 or 40,000 US dollars. Also, I can state that the recordings broadcast by [the TV program] Counterpoint in no way came from the so-called SIN [National Intelligence Service]. They came from a private citizen."

"I do not want to interfere," Fujimori continued, "in the investigations that the Judicial Branch, the Attorney-General's Office, may carry out. But any private citizen can have this scanner just like any private citizen can have ham radio equipment and tune in to conversations in certain frequencies. These scanners operate like this and they can be easily purchased in the market. I suggest that your channel, or any medium, goes to Miami to see that these devices do exist. What I do consider necessary, following this experience, is for us to study some legal measures to regulate the use of these scanners or else the calls made using cellular telephones can be easily intercepted."

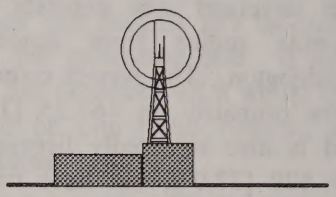
EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT CELLULAR FRAUD. A 3,500-word special feature in the July-August Time Digital by Elaine Shannon featured an in-depth look at cellular fraud and its associated criminals. The article features profiles of several notorious cellular pirates as well as the type of equipment they use. Cellular companies are fighting back with various "fraud-management systems" that range from identifying suspicious calling patterns to radio-frequency fingerprinting to digital authentication.

The article ends with a plea from the FBI which wants Congress to broaden its cellphone wiretapping authority to allow agents to track suspects as they change cellphone identities. This article is a must-read for anyone interested in the underground cellular industry.

FEDs TO HACK DIGITAL CELLULAR. Digital wireless phones are harder to tap, reports the July 17 Sun-Sentineland, and the FBI wants the cellular phone companies to help them do just that. But how to do that has ended up on hold, as the cellular phone companies and the FBI have failed to reach an agreement. Cellular telephone companies, hoping to break a logjam with the FBI, asked federal regulators to adopt the industry's plan to make legal eavesdropping easier in the digital age.

The Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association told the FCC that the industry's plan for technical standards would facilitate court-ordered surveillance of wireless, digital phone conversations. A 1994 law requires wireless companies and the telephone industry to make such technology available by 1998. But after 30 months of negotiations, the cellular industry and the FBI have been unable to agree on such a plan. An FCC official told the Associated Press that the law gives the commission the authority to establish technical standards if an agreement between industry and law enforcers is not reached or if agreed-to technical specifications are insufficient.

The cellular industry contends that the FBI's proposals would expand wiretap authority beyond the scope of the 1994 law. "Our industry is now in the untenable position of either being in violation of the law and subject to fines for not meeting the act's deadline or being liable for lawsuits if we adopt those FBI proposals," CTIA President Thomas Wheeler claimed.



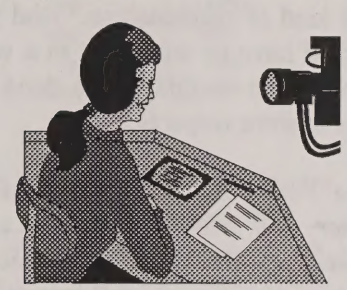
MEDIA TO MONITOR TRUNKED SYSTEM. In response to concerns raised by news organizations, the June 19 Des Moines Register states a policy is being drafted to allow "sanctioned" media to monitor regular Cedar Rapids, Iowa radio traffic that has not been available since the city installed its new radio system. The manager of the city's joint communications center said the policy would allow the city "to responsibly serve the media and the city in providing needed public information to the citizens of Cedar Rapids."

Under the plan, newspapers, television and radio stations may purchase radio equipment to receive police and fire communications. Individuals who use scanners for entertainment would not be allowed access under the proposal. Black Hawk County already provides limited access to the media. "What we don't get --and what we wanted to get --was car-to-car (transmissions)," says a reporter who covers the police beat for the Courier.

EUROPEAN TRUNKING STANDARDS. The Public Safety Radio Communications Project was officially launched in England by the Home Office in 1995. The project's goal was to transform analog radio systems currently used by emergency services into a state-of-the-art digital network that supports voice, data and video. Two consortia put in bids in October 1996, the June 19 Computer Weekly reports. Quadrant, led by British Telecoms (BT), consists of Motorola, Nokia and TRW. The second consortium, which suddenly withdrew from the bid, was led by Racal and was made up of Fluor Daniel, Ericsson, Smith System Engineering, Simoco Telecom, NTL and N Rothschild.

Before its withdrawal some members of the Racal group voiced their concerns to the Home Office. "The study could cost about 10m pounds but there's no mandate on the police to implement any system put forward so we thought the commercial risks were just too high," says a spokesman for Racal. Another concern of the second consortium was that Quadrant was enjoying an unfair advantage because it has on board Nokia and Motorola, the two leading hardware supporters of the new pan-European digital mobile radio communication standard, Trans European Trunked Radio.

Trans European Trunked Radio (Tetra) is the pan-European digital mobile radio communication standard designed to meet the needs of users of both private and public mobile radio systems. Motorola and Nokia are two of the biggest developers of the standard and have fully compatible products. The standard is being tested by the (Isle of) Jersey police force. In Norway, a system has been ordered for the new Oslo airport, and in the Netherlands, the police IT organization has signed a contract for a Tetra system to be used initially for technical evaluation and then to form part of a three-nation system that will include Belgium and Germany. Germany is also implementing a further Tetra trial in Berlin.



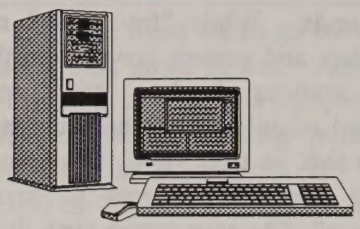
L.A.'s OVERNIGHT CAMERAMEN. A 5,000-word essay in the Aug. 7 New Times Los Angeles by Susan Goldsmith featured a profile of the city's "video vultures." About 15 or so full-time free-lance TV cameramen scour the streets of L.A. late each night, she says, so viewers can "watch telegenic gore at 6 and 11 the next day." The free-lancers hit the streets after TV stations send their regular camera crews home.

Night after night, Goldsmight writes, they "plunge into the arc-lighted vivarium of L.A., working what they call the 'corpse and flame beat' to capture videotape so violent, so terrifying that it puts a smile on a TV news director's face." She says the stringers use "police scanners like electronic divining rods to find stories. They're continually attuned to the shorthand reports of disaster and mayhem that pour from the scanners --the only broadcasts in L.A. that are more depressing than TV news."

Free-lancers, also known as stringers, see themselves as the Marines of TV news, she notes, going wherever the action is, whenever it happens, hitting the beach long before other newshounds. While "fat-salaried reporters and camera crews from the big stations slumber, free-lancers prowl relentlessly for breaking stories that, in their view, the community needs and wants to know about." She says critics view them as "journalistic vultures, profiting from others' misery and giving TV viewers the dreadful impression that the city is no more than a smoggy no-man's-land where daily life is limited mostly to carjackings, gang killings, kidnappings, serial rapes, five-alarm fires, freeway pileups, police sweeps, plane crashes, and pipebomb explosions."

"One of the reasons crime news is so popular," says the head of the University of Miami's Center for the Advancement of Modern Media and a former senior vice president of NBC News, "is because it's very easy to get: Listen to a police scanner and find a story. And stringers are part of the problem, because they make it easy for stations to cover crime."

Some photographers she interviewed worked for Citycopter and Newsreel Video. Newsreel Video stringers work from 9 p.m. to about 7:30 a.m. They deliver their footage to TV stations beginning around 4 a.m. Newsreel is paid about $135 for each clip a local station uses, no matter how long or what it shows. Network news shows pay about $270 per clip. Newsreel typically sells 15 clips a night; its stringers make anywhere from $75 to $150 per shift, with a bonus for material that airs on a network. Full-time stringers earn about $30,000 a year. By contrast, full-time station cameramen start at about $60,000.



MORE SCANNER AUDIO ON THE WEB. Rebroadcasting police and fire scanner radio transmissions on the net, reports the July 20 Providence Journal-Bulletin, is on the rise. http://www.policescanner.com lets surfers monitor police scanners in New York, Los Angeles and Dallas. That site says it will soon add an interactive Internet-based radio talk show for scanner enthusiasts. You can also hear the Dallas Fire Department there.

Scanner traffic of the Providence Fire Department is available at http://indy.ids.net/fire.html. Check http://www.loa.com and click on LOA RealAudio to monitor the Providence police. To hear the audio feed, download the "RealPlayer" software, which is free, from the Progressive Network's Web site at http://www.realaudio.com. You'll need a sound card and at least a 14.4 Kbps modem; the sound is clearer with a 28.8 Kbps modem.

A SCANTAINER? The June 12 CNN Showbiz Today featured a profile of a D.J. named "Scanner" who samples snippets of conversations lifted from scanners in his music. "A little warning for you --be careful what you say into that cordless phone," the show's host warned. "Not only could someone overhear your conversation, it could wind up in music that they'll be dancing to in a nightclub someday. Out of the most mundane snatches of intercepted cordless phone conversations, Scanner --whose real name is Robin Rambeau --creates oral collages. Scanner says he's careful about the material he uses, edits it highly and changes the voices. He performs in England. "What I enjoy about this," Scanner remarks, is "you're hearing two alien voices in so-called space. You don't know who these people are, what kind of relationships. And you yourself have to work at it in a way. It's what playwrights have done for years in some respects."

*Steve Finch, Ken Fowler, Joe Gallagher and Mike McKeehan contributed to this issue's NewsScan. Contact Alan for the full text of any article. Please pass along any articles of possible interest.*

Please address all correspondence to Alan. We encourage readers to submit material and write articles that relate to the hobby. All submissions are subject to editing for style and content. When submitting material please make certain we have your phone number should we have any questions. We welcome frequency and visitor requests, but please include a reply envelope.

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The Capitol Hill Monitor is the non-profit newsletter of the *Capitol Hill Monitors*. The newsletter keeps scanner enthusiasts abreast of local meetings, frequency profiles and other topics of interest. Dues are $10 and include 12 issues (back issues cost $1 each). Kindly make checks payable to Alan Henney. Membership will be prorated accordingly in the event of a postage increase.

**Join Local Scanner Enthusiasts On-Line!**

We encourage computer users to take part in discussions on Jack Anderson's Frequency Forum computer BBS at 703-207-9622 (8-N-1); or subscribe to the Scan-DC listserv by sending an e-mail to majordomo@grove.net with the words "subscribe scan-dc" (no quotes) as the message.

## METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

Totals by District from 01/01/96 to 06/30/96

| | 1D | 2D | 3D | 4D | 5D | 6D | 7D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Homicide | 19 | 5 | 38 | 31 | 29 | 41 | 46 |
| Rape | 15 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 28 |
| Robbery | 814 | 279 | 776 | 658 | 599 | 426 | 460 |
| ADW | 350 | 102 | 410 | 523 | 516 | 491 | 694 |
| Burglary | 875 | 862 | 950 | 740 | 906 | 623 | 599 |
| Theft/Other | 1273 | 1522 | 863 | 610 | 457 | 378 | 289 |
| Theft/Auto | 2731 | 1623 | 1996 | 1168 | 1086 | 631 | 457 |
| Stolen Auto | 737 | 431 | 600 | 970 | 881 | 882 | 712 |
| Arson | 11 | 2 | 9 | 14 | 0 | 8 | 7 |
| TOTAL | 6835 | 4828 | 5550 | 4709 | 4482 | 3496 | 3292 |

Totals by District from 01/01/97 to 06/30/97

| | 1D | | 2D | | 3D | | 4D | | 5D | | 6D | | 7D | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Homicide | 15 | -21% | 2 | -60% | 19 | -50% | 21 | 0% | 30 | 3% | 34 | -17% | 34 | -26% |
| Rape | 16 | 6% | 6 | 200% | 7 | -12% | 26 | 420% | 16 | 100% | 27 | 350% | 40 | 42% |
| Robbery | 548 | -32% | 253 | -9% | 533 | -31% | 503 | -23% | 491 | -18% | 331 | -22% | 371 | -19% |
| ADW | 372 | 6% | 96 | -5% | 415 | 1% | 468 | -10% | 497 | -3% | 497 | 1% | 731 | 5% |
| Burglary | 468 | -46% | 674 | -21% | 714 | -16% | 801 | 8% | 657 | -27% | 452 | -27% | 519 | -13% |
| Theft/Other | 1084 | -14% | 1497 | -1% | 750 | -13% | 538 | -11% | 492 | 7% | 335 | -11% | 270 | -6% |
| Theft/Auto | 2062 | -24% | 1257 | -23% | 1855 | -7% | 1231 | 5% | 1058 | -2% | 738 | 16% | 550 | 20% |
| Stolen Auto | 504 | -31% | 432 | 0% | 474 | -21% | 809 | -16% | 584 | -33% | 576 | -34% | 430 | -39% |
| Arson | 8 | -27% | 0 | -100% | 9 | 0% | 15 | 7% | 0 | **** | 15 | 87% | 13 | 85% |
| TOTAL | 5077 | -25% | 4216 | -12% | 4776 | -13% | 4412 | -6% | 3825 | -14% | 3005 | -13% | 2958 | -10% |

## CITYWIDE CRIME SUMMARY REPORT

COMPARING 01/01/97 - 06/30/97 TO 01/01/96 - 06/30/96

| PART I CRIMES | 1997 | 1996 | % DIFFERENCE | Norm Crime Levels Low | Avg | High |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| HOMICIDE | 155 | 199 | -22 % | 109 | 177 | 246 |
| RAPE | 138 | 72 | 92 % | 36 | 66 | 95 |
| ROBBERY | 3029 | 4012 | -25 % | 1939 | 3131 | 4324 |
| ADW | 3076 | 3086 | 0 % | 1665 | 2854 | 4042 |
| CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS | 6398 | 7369 | -13 % | | | |
| BURGLARY | 4285 | 5455 | 21 % | 2831 | 4681 | 6531 |
| THEFT/OTHER | 4966 | 5392 | -8 % | 2908 | 4861 | 6814 |
| THEFT/AUTO | 8751 | 9692 | -10 % | 4025 | 6714 | 9404 |
| STOLEN AUTO | 3809 | 5213 | -27 % | 2156 | 3418 | 4680 |
| ARSON | 60 | 51 | 18 % | 29 | 50 | 72 |
| CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY | 21871 | 25803 | 15 % | | | |
| TOTAL | 28269 | 33172 | -15 % | | | |

* Current Part One crime totals as reported on the District P.D. 99's. These are NOT official totals.

**The Capitol Hill Monitor**

**6912 Prince Georges Avenue**
**Takoma Park, MD 20912**